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# THIRTY-ONE GENERATIONS

*A Thousand Years of*
*PERCYS and PIERCES*
*972 to 1969*

BARNARD LEDWARD COLBY

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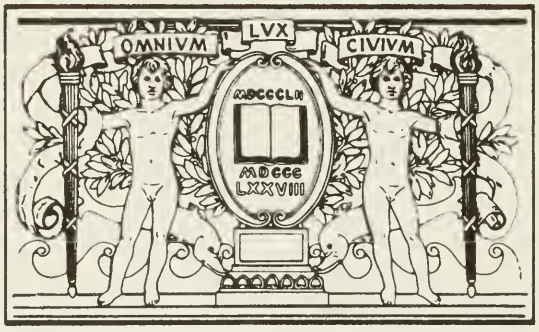


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## INTRODUCTION

My original intention was to gather in typewritten, or at the most mimeographed, form for the benefit solely of my children, nieces and nephews genealogical data bequeathed to me by my great uncle, Curtis Irish Pierce, and my grandmother, Cannie Belle Pierce Ledward. But by the time I had completed this task I had engaged in many hours of research which clarified, substantiated and expanded the information handed down to me. The knowledge of the family I acquired in this work revealed that I possessed facts which would be of great interest to thousands of other members of the clan. Thus was born this volume.

Although considerably larger than some "family histories" I have seen advertised (and, to my disappointment, have ordered) this book nevertheless is small in size compared with some genealogies. On the other hand, it is also selling for considerably less than any genuine genealogical book that has ever come to my attention.

The number of pages in this book do not begin to suggest the months of work consumed in their preparation. I have spent considerably more time and money in research, letter writing, traveling and prowling about libraries than I ever intended when I embarked upon this effort. Furthermore, the demand for such a volume as this is limited quite obviously to members of the family and accordingly this is a limited edition in the strictest sense of the word.

When volume is low, the cost per copy is correspondingly high. Despite this, the printing cost is below average because of a fortunate connection I have in the printing trade. Most of the expense in such a venture as this, however, lies not in the actual printing, but in postage. Sending out letters to the thousands of members of the family I have been able to locate is expensive. But happily I am not writing and peddling this so much for profit as for the pleasure it gives me to corral all the early history of the family between two covers for whatever satisfaction it may give my descendants and contemporaries.

My main, but by no means only, sources of information are two books by Colonel Frederick Clifton Pierce, published in 1888 and 1889, out of print and now selling at a premium as collectors' items. All efforts to locate heirs of Colonel Pierce have been fruitless, but Joel Munsell's Sons of South Norwalk, Conn., who published both books at Albany, have given me permission to quote from them. Family members seeking additional information are referred to the publishers, who have some copies of both of Colonel Pierce's books for sale.

Neither book gives the whole lineage contained herein and much additional data have been added to the facts found in them. These two books and other sources to which I am indebted are:

Pearce Genealogy by Col. Frederick Clifton Pierce, 1888, being a record of the posterity of Richard Pearce, an early inhabitant of Portsmouth, R.I., who came from England and whose genealogy is traced back to 972.

Pierce Genealogy No. IV, by Frederick C. Pierce, 1889, being the record of the posterity of Captain Michael, John and Captain William Pierce who came to this country from England.

New England Genealogy and Antiquarian Register; New England Historical and Genealogical Register.

The May-Flower and Her Log, Azel Ames, 1901.
Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Thomas Percy, 1765.
The Bradford History, 1898.
The Lincoln, Pearce, Porter, Ayers and Related Families, William Ensign Lincoln, 1930.
The Master of the Mayflower, Henry Justin Smith.
Directory of Ancestral Heads of New England Families, 1620-1700, Frank R. Holmes, 1923.
English Exploration and Settlement in North America, 1497-1689, Winsor's History of America, III.
Thanksgiving, Its Origin, Celebration and Significance, edited by Robert H. Schauffler.
Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England, W. DeLoss Love, Jr.
Bancroft's History of the United States.
Arthur's Etymological Dictionary of Christian Names, 1857.
The Percy Chartulary, Publications of the Surtees Society, Vol. 142.
The Captain Michael Pierce Fight, 1908.
Dugdale's Baronage; Collins' Peerage.
Quarterly Review.
Shakespeare's Henry IV, V and VI.
Encyclopedia Brittanica, 1895 and 1929.
Joel Munsell's Sons, South Norwalk, Conn.
Goodspeed's Book Shop, Boston, Mass.
Life Magazine, newspaper clippings, etc.

While this volume traces the direct line from Manfred de Percy, a Danish chieftain, born about 972, down to my children, it is valuable as a family record to thousands of Pierces (however spelled) in the United States. Another Pierce may have only to trace his line back a few generations to link with the direct line traced herein; then he too will have a complete record from 972 to the present. The very least that can be said for this book is that it gives the early history of a great family with which all Pierces, however spelled, are probably connected in some way.

The thirty-one generations in direct descent from Manfred de Percy are designated by numbers in parenthesis.

BARNARD L. COLBY

New London, Connecticut
November 4, 1947.

## CHAPTER I

## THE FAMILY

Let me warn inveterate ancestor worshippers at the outset that for every family hero who struts these pages there is a traitor or a knave lurking in the binding.

Let me caution my children not to be too exhilarated to learn that they are descended from a follower of William the Conqueror and from Charlemagne (742), king of the Franks and emperor of the Romans, from warriors related to royalty who set kings on thrones and cuffed them off, from noblemen prominent in the minstrelsy of England and immortalized by Shakespeare. For while some were great and good men, others were rogues of the highest order!

I have placed as much emphasis on the villains, such as John Pierce who owned the Plymouth Colony patent (some say the Mayflower herself) and sought to make the Pilgrims his vassals, as upon the heroes, such as his brother William, captain of the Mayflower on her second voyage to this country, prominent in the early affairs of the Colonies and regarded by some as having been instrumental in bringing about the first official Thanksgiving day!

Those of you who seek names that will make a stir when dropped casually into a dinner conversation will not be disappointed. But I warn you: Some may make more of a stir than you bargain for! Our ancestors were a bold, adverturous and warlike lot, as brave as any, but no more virtuous and honorable than any other family —and no less avaricious and deceitful.

Of the characters you are about to meet, one was hanged, drawn and quartered for treason, another was beheaded; three dwelled so long in the dreaded Tower of London they must have come to regard it as home, and one of them was shot there; two were slain trying to depose a despotic king; three others perished on the battlefield, one was murdered by a mob, another felled by a Spanish ball on the deck of his own ship, yet another killed by Indians.

But take heart! There is not another English noble house so distinguished throughout the whole range of English history as the Percys, according to no less an authority than the Encyclopedia Brittanica, it being remarkable alike for its "long, unbroken line, its high achievements and its general culture of arts and letters."

The Quarterly Review for May, 1843, says: "The House of Percy stands pre-eminent for the number and rank of the families which are represented by the present Duke of Northumberland, whose banner consequently exhibits an assemblage of nearly 900 armorial designs, among which are those of King Henry VII, several younger branches of blood royal, the sovereign houses of France, Castile, Leon and Scotland, and the ducal houses of Normandy and Brittany, forming a galaxy of heraldic honors altogether unparalleled."

The Pierce coat of arms, reproduced on the cover, consists of three ravens rising sable, fesse-hummette, crest of dove with olive branch in its beak, and the motto: "Dixit et Fecit" (He said and he did). The Percy shield was a coat of gold on blue. Life Magazine in its May 26, 1947, issue, reproduced in color the Percy shield and the complex shield of the Northumberland branch of the family.

"This renowned family of Northumberland, England," says Arthur's Etymological Dictionary of Christian Names, "derived their name from Percy forest in the Province of Maen, Normandy, whence they came, which signifies a stony place, from 'pierre'. It may signify a hunting place, from 'pirsen' (Teutonic) to hunt; 'percer' (French) to penetrate, to force one's way."

Both "Percy" and "Algernon," which was popular in the family as a given name, are effeminate to American ears but "Percy," we note here, bears a connotation of hard masculinity, and "Algernon" is a nickname meaning "with the whiskers" and was first applied to William de Percy, a follower of William the Conqueror.

After the family name was changed from Percy to Pierce (or Peirce or Pearce) it is found in any one of these three spellings. The ancestor who made the change in the family name was called Pierce, Pearce and Peirce, probably because of the lack of uniformity in spelling in those days, and the three spellings apparently were used interchangeably by many of his descendants. Pierces, Pearces and Peirces, it seems, all trace their lineage back to this Richard and, through him, to the Percys.

The New England Historical and Genealogical Register lists after the family name Percy these variations: Pearcy, Peirsey, Percey, Percie, Percye, Persie, Piercy and Piersey.

After Pierce are listed: Parce, Parse, Pearce, Peares, Pearc, Pearse, Pearss, Peerce, Peeres, Peers, Peerse, Peirc, Peirce, Peirs, Peirse, Perce, Pers, Perse, Perss, Piers, Pierse, and Pirce.

Nine of the ten chapters in this book are devoted to the early history of the family; that is, the period from 972 to and including the three famous brothers who were so prominent in the affairs of Plymouth Colony. Only Chapter IX is concerned with the descent from Michael Pierce to my children. All the other chapters deal with ancestors through whom thousands of family members in this country, however they spell the family name, may trace their descent.

In the interest of uniformity, the Percy and Pierce spellings will be used herein.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BEGINNING — 972 to 1299

This story begins nearly a thousand years ago. Turn your mind back a thousand years to the early Middle Ages: It would be 500 years before Michelangelo dipped brush in paint, Joan of Arc stood at the stake or Columbus decided to prove the world is round; 300 years before Marco Polo would pack a grip, 200 before Robin Hood would lead his Merry Men, a century before knights would set forth on the first Crusade!

Our story starts in 972 with the birth of a male infant named MANFRED (1). We know little of him except that he grew up to become a Danish cheiftain and that he, with his son GALFRED (2) and other associates and their families joined forces with Ralph the Ganger, son of a Norwegian Viking who was leading his people to a warmer climate. The emigrants sailed up the River Loire and settled in the Province of Maen in Normandy. Here Manfred and his family adopted the name Percy.

"Brave Galfred to Normandy with vent'rous Rolla came;
"And, from his Norman castles won, assumed the Percy name."
(Hermit of Warkworth by Thomas Percy).

Two sons of Galfred, William and Serlo de Percy, with 50,000 others crossed the English channel in the army of William the Conqueror in 1066 and took part in the great Battle of Hastings, fought in September of that year, near Southampton, England. The Directory of Ancestral Heads of New England Families says one man bearing the name of Percy was captain of the Conqueror's fleet, but proof that it was either William or Serlo is lacking.

For his part in the conquest of England, WILLIAM (3) received large holdings in Hampshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. By the time of the Domesday Survey, the family held 86 lordships in the North Riding. William refounded the Abbey of Whitby which the Danes had destroyed and his brother Serlo became abbot. William's wife Emma, daughter of Hugh de Port, a great Hampshire baron, gave him several sons.

The eldest, ALAN (4), succeeded him. Alan's son WILLIAM (5) had a son also named WILLIAM (6). William had a son of the same name who died, and the family inheritance finally fell to his sister, AGNES de PERCY (7) from whom all later Percies descended.

For eight generations the family was to be headed by a Henry, "a remarkable continuance of a single Christian name" which "would have been less surprising in later and more peaceful times." The first four Earls of Northumberland of this name and one heir apparent were killed in battle or died violent deaths.

Agnes married Josceline de Louvaine, younger son of Godfrey, reigning duke of Brabant, and brother of Adelais (Alice) of Louvaine, King Henry I's second queen. Josceline boasted a noble heritage, having descended through Gerberga, the daughter of Charles, Duke of Lorraine, from Charlemagne (born 742), king of the Franks and emperor of the Romans and, in the male line, from the ancient dukes of Hainault.

Yet the proud Agnes demanded that he give up either his family name or coat of arms. Josceline decided by assuming the name Percy, thus keeping alive this illustrious family, and the ancient royal arms of Brabant were incorporated into the Percy shield.

Josceline, through his sister and king-brother-in-law, received the great estate of Petworth in Sussex. He held several important posts including castellan at Arundel. A son, Richard, (1170-1244) was one of the barons who rose against King John and Henry III and was one of the 25 barons named to enforce the Magna Carta.

Josceline and Agnes had another son HENRY de PERCY (8) who married Isabel de Bruce of Skelton, whose family later supplied Scotland with kings. By marrying Isabel, Henry fell heir to the privilege and duty of escorting the lady of Skelton castle to Christmas mass each year and afterward dining with her.

Their son, WILLIAM de PERCY (9), third territorial lord of Petworth, was twice married, the second time to Ellen de Baliol, who added to the family holdings Dalton in the bishopric of Durham, probably the Percys' first English possession north of the Tees.

She also gave him a son, HENRY de PERCY (10) who married Eleanor, daughter of John Plantagenet and a descendant of the Count of Anjou, second husband of Maud of England, empress of Germany.

Their youngest son, HENRY de PERCY (11) (1272-1315) inherited the family honors and riches. He was most active during Edward I's Scottish wars as Governor of Galloway until Robert Bruce drove him out of Turnberry castle and back into England. (In 1297 he was sent to Scotland in command of forces of his uncle, Earl of Warren and general of all the armies north of the Trent. Dugdale's Baronage, Vol. I, P. 272). He was one of the victors at Dunbar. He was in fact a warrior from youth to old age and for the success of his arms King Edward rewarded him with the Scotch Earldom of Carrick, declared forfeited by Robert the Bruce, later king of Scotland, and governorships of the Castles of Bamborough and Scarborough.

Having been summoned in 1299 to the House of Lords which created for him the Baroncy in fee of Percy, he later acquired Alnwick in the county of Northumberland which William Tyron, Saxon baron, had owned when he was slain in the Battle of Hastings. He procured also the Lordship of Corbridge in Northumberland where his descendants presided over a princely court. ("Barons and those knyghtes bold, and other gentlemen with hym entertayned in fee, as menyall men of his household whom he as 'lord worshiply maintayned." From Skelton's Elegy on the death of the Fourth Earl of Northumberland, Dugdale's Baronage.) Henry died in 1315, leaving by his wife, the Lady Eleanor Fitz-Alan, a son, HENRY (12), second Baron Percy of Alnwick (1299-1352).

## CHAPTER III

### 1299 to 1364

This second baron, before he was 21, received a grant of the Northumbrian fees which had belonged to Patrick de Dunbar, Scotch Earl of Dunbar and March, who had risen against King Edward II. (A fee, or fief, under the feudal system, was land held from a superior in return for a specific service.) He joined in 1326 with Prince Edward, Queen Isabella and other barons in suppressing the Spencers and when the grateful prince took the throne as Edward III he gave Percy custody of the castle of Skipton in Yorkshire and the castle and barony of Warkworth in Northumberland (See the Hermit of Warkworth). Because he was one of Edward III's favorites, he received from Edward Baliol, whose claim to the Scottish crown had been supported by the English king, large Scottish grants of the forfeited estates of David Bruce's followers. Shortly afterward he received a grant of 500 marks a year out of the old customs at Berwick.

In 1346 he defeated the Scots at Neville's Cross and took prisoner their king, David Bruce. The Douglas clan fought with the Scots and perhaps that storied rivalry in arms of these two great border names started here. By his wife, Idonea de Clifford, daughter of Robert Lord Clifford, whose line had such a claim to beauty, Henry had several children, including Thomas de Percy who at 22 became Bishop of Norwich, and Matilda de Percy who married John Lord Nevill of Raby and became mother of the first Earl of Westmoreland. His eldest son, HENRY de PERCY (13) (1322-1368) who became third Lord Percy of Alnwick in 1351-2, went with Richard III on his expedition to France which culminated in the victory at Crecy. He held important positions in later life. He married, when she was only 14, Lady Mary Plantagenet, daughter of Henry, Earl of Lancaster and grandson of King Henry III. He left two sons, Thomas, who became Earl of Worcester, and HENRY (14), who was made Earl of Northumberland at the coronation of King Richard II when he served as marshal of England — "two names which the drama has vied with history in rendering illustrious."

"The near alliance of the two brothers by blood to the reigning family," writes Colonel Pierce, "and the stirring times in which they lived insured them the opportunity of distinction while their own ability and enterprise urged them to profit by it. Both served with honor in the French wars of Edward III, both long enjoyed the favor of his weak successor, Richard II, and by him were elevated to their earldoms; both deserted his failing fortunes and combined to place the able and domineering Henry of Bolingbroke on the throne; and both, unable to endure the severe sway with which he wielded the rod of empire they had placed in his hand, endeavored by open war to depose him and perished in the bold attempt."

(Before the break with King Henry, Worcester, in Henry IV, Part I, p. 3, reminds him of his family's services: "Our house, my sovereign liege, little deserves the scourge of greatness to be used on it; and the same greatness to which our hands have help to make so portly").

Worcester, when only Sir Thomas Percy, was admiral of the English fleet sent to Spain in 1387 to take the Kingdoms of Castile and Leon on behalf of John of Gaunt (fourth son of Edward III and first Duke of Lancaster from whom that house descended) who claimed them by virtue of his marriage to Constance of Castile. He went to Paris in 1392 to make peace with Charles VI of France who, according to Froisart, "made a dinner to the English knightes and called Syr Thomas Percy to sytte at his borde and called him cosyn, by reason of Northumberlande's bloud."

His brother Henry, as Lord Percy, had with John of Gaunt been a prominent supporter of the early religious reformer, John Wickliffe, and had stood by him when he was cited before the archbishop at St. Paul's. Showing an independence characteristic of a northern baron, he disregarded a summons by Richard II to appear in court, was banished, and fled to Scotland. He joined Henry of Lancaster after he had landed at Ravenspur and helped lead King Richard into his clutches at Conway. For this King Henry gave him the lifelong post of Constable of England, plus a gift of the Isle of Man, high posts in Cheshire, Wales and on the Scottish border and a commissionership for the marriage of Henry's daughter Blanche with Louis, Duke of Bavaria.

## CHAPTER IV

### 1364 to 1403

But his life is so closely entwined with that of his celebrated son, HENRY (15) "Prince Hotspur of the North," that duplication will be avoided and continuity better preserved if we follow their progress together.

Hotspur, the first Northumberland Earl's eldest son by his first wife, Margaret Nevill, sister of the first Earl of Westmoreland, was born May 30, 1364. His nickname was probably given him by the Scots with whom he spent most of his life fighting. First armed at 14 when the Castle of Berwick was besieged by the Scots, his spur was never cold. (Shakespeare's Henry IV thought so highly of him that he says in Part I, Act I, Scene I: "Oh, that it could be proved that some night-tripping fairy had exchanged in cradle clothes our children, where they lay, and called mine Percy—his Plantagenet!").

Hotspur was despatched to Calais in 1386 to make raids on France but was recalled within a short time to defend his country against a French naval attack. When the Scots sent a force under James, second Earl of Douglas, and the Earls of Moray and Mar to invade England through Carlisle in 1388, Hotspur and his brother, Sir Ralph Percy, were sent against them by their father, the earl.

They met the Scottish forces at Newcastle-on-Tyne where Douglas captured Hotspur's banner. The Scots, however, beat a retreat and Hotspur, swearing he would recover his pennon, led the pursuit. He attacked the Scots at Otterburn (August of 1388) and is said, perhaps erroneously, to have slain Douglas with his own hand. Thus, in ballad and story, Percy came to be one of the heroes of Otterburn or Chevy Chase.

("At Otterburn began this spurn opon a monnyday; Ther was the dougghti Douglas slean, the Persi never went away." From the more ancient version of Chevy Chase. "The Percy was a man of strength, I tell you in thys stounde; he smote the Douglas at the sworde's length, that he felle to the grouynde." From the ballad, Battle of Otterboarne. See Reliques of Ancient English Poetry by Thomas Percy. The ballad writers apparently confused two battles.)

But when the fighting had ended Hotspur was the prisoner of Sir John Montgomery and his brother Ralph was held by Sir John Maxwell. Hotspur's captor freed him in return for a handsome ransom which included 3,000 pounds donated by Richard II. In further recompense, the king extended to five years Hotspur's term as warden of Carlisle and the West March.

Nevertheless, when Henry of Lancaster landed at Yorkshire in 1399, Hotspur and his father and uncle threw their powerful support to him and helped make him King Henry IV. The new king rewarded Hotspur with Roxburgh, Berwick and Bamburgh castles and made him warden of the East March which carried a peacetime salary of 3,000 pounds and a wartime salary of four times as much. His father was placed in charge of the West March. In addition, Hotspur was named Constable of the castles of Flint, Conway, Chester, Carnarvon and Denbigh, appointed justiciar of North Wales, and presented with the island of Aglesey with Beaumaris castle.

The next year, April 1, 1401, his castle of Conway was captured by William and Rees ap Tudor. Once again Hotspur set forth to do battle, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, but himself financing the expedition. He took Marioneth, Conway and Carnarvon by the end of May after which he applied for back salary which was refused. About the same time Hotspur asked his monarch's permission to ransom his brother-in-law, Sir Edward Mortimer, who had been taken prisoner by Owen Glendower who claimed descent from the ancient princes of Wales and had been trying to persuade the Welsh to renounce their allegiance to King Henry. The king denied permission, retorting that Mortimer had gone voluntarily and no loyal subject could wish him back. It is often dangerous to place someone too deeply in your debt; King Henry owed so much to the Percy family that the gnawing awareness of it must have distilled to bitterness.

Hotspur let this last rebuke pass and when the Scots under the third Earl of Douglas and Murdock Stewart, the Duke of Albany's son, raided England through Northumberland in 1402, he and his father intercepted them in their flight homeward toward the border. They roundly defeated the Scots September 14 at Hamildon Hill (also Humbledon and Homildon) and took prisoner their general, Earl of Douglas, and other Scottish nobles. (See Sir Walter Scott's drama of Halidon Hill in which the scene is with poetic license transferred from Homildon to the earlier battlefield of Halidon.)

This pleased the king, who wanted to use the prisoners in bartering for an agreeable peace with Scotland. But Percy regarded them, especially the Douglas, as his personal property and refused to surrender them to any such scheme. The king summoned Percy to explain at court. Hotspur appeared and when Henry demanded Douglas, Percy demanded Mortimer. Angered, the king struck Percy in the face, drew his sword and called him a traitor. "Not here, but on the field," Percy replied, and got away with it.

The Percys had now had their fill of King Henry, on whose head they had placed the crown, and they began plotting to remove it. Hotspur joined forces with his erstwhile enemies, the Earl of Douglas and Owen Glendower, and his uncle Thomas, Earl of Worcester, and, in 1403, Hotspur proclaimed the young Earl of March King of England.

The fight was on. Hotspur took command of the revolutionists, his father being confined by illness at Berwick, and marched with Douglas toward Shrewsbury where they were to join Glendower. Hotspur's uncle, Worcester, was the king's lieutenant in South Wales but he too revolted and joined them, bringing reinforcements.

Arriving the morning of July 21, 1403, at the Castle Foregate in Shrewsbury and demanding provisions, they were startled to discover that King Henry's forces had arrived before them. Hotspur's army retired about three and a half miles toward Whitchurch. There, in the afternoon, the royal army joined battle. An arrow killed Hotspur. The Earls of Douglas and Worcester and other rebel nobles were captured and their army scattered. Worcester was executed the following day. Hotspur's body was buried at Whitchurch but two days later was dug up and displayed at Shrewsbury; the head was cut off and suspended on the gates of York.

## CHAPTER V

### 1403 to 1590

Hotspur's father, despite his illness, had set out to aid his son and brother but arrived too late. With both now dead, he had only his young grandson, HENRY PERCY, (16), son of Hotspur and Elizabeth (the "gentle Kate" of Shakespeare and sister of Sir Edward Mortimer). Perhaps because he hoped to salvage something for the boy, the Earl went peaceably to King Henry. He was taken in custody but his power and influence were still great and he was acquitted of treason in full parliament, with all honors and possessions restored to him. So powerful had the family become that the king "lest all the north should revolt to the Scots," commanded the Earl of Northumberland and Ralph Nevill, Earl of Westmoreland, who had stood by the Lancastrian standard, "in token of perfect amity to kiss each other in open parliament."

But confidence was lacking between king and the earl from this time on, and in 1405 Northumberland joined the insurrection of Archbishop Scrope. Scrope, beheaded as a rebel, was later venerated as a martyr throughout the north of England. Northumberland fled to Scotland, taking his grandson. Leaving the lad with the family's old enemies, the Scots, the Earl returned to Northumberland in 1407, his ancient tenantry and retainers rallied to his standard and he proclaimed that he had come to relieve the nation of tyranny and oppression. His forces advanced as far as Karnesborough in Yorkshire where, at Bramham Moor, he was defeated and killed. His white-haired head was sent to London as a trophy.

His estates confiscated and his titles attainted, HENRY PERCY, the second Earl (16), was brought up with kindness by the Scots "as if he had not been the whelp of the lion breed that had been the defense of the English and the terror of the Scottish border." Early in the reign of King Henry V, while young Percy was still an exile, the Earl of Cambridge conspired to return him to England along with Thomas de Trumpyngton, the imposter who bore a remarkable resemblance to the king, hoping to raise an insurrection. The plot was discovered and Cambridge was executed for treason.

About this time the name Henry de Percy, Knt., was listed in Henry V's retinue on the voyage which led to the victory at Agincourt. (See Shakespeare's Henry V). It is not in the list of battle casualties which probably means he was either wounded previously at the siege of Harfleur or had remained there in garrison. This knight, however, was probably a son of Sir Thomas Percy, younger brother of Hotspur; according to other records the Henry de Percy under consideration was summoned from Scotland by the king and his family's former high position restored to him.

The fact that Percy had married Lady Eleanor Nevill, the monarch's cousin, explains the king's act at least in part. King Henry had been led to forgive the Percys also by his aunt, Countess of Westmoreland and daughter of John of Gaunt, but it is probable that the king also recognized the value of having the Percys' merits and influence to draw upon. "For this much of its

facts the beautiful ballad, The Hermit of Warkworth, of which Percy and his bride are hero and heroine, has its warrant in history." (See Collins' Peerage, Pp. 70-1) The House of Lancaster found no cause to regret its kindness to Percy; although his grandfather and father had died fighting against it, he and four of his sons were to die fighting for it.

"In the third year of King Henry VI," says Collins' Peerage, "he, for the better confirmation of the dignity of the Earl of Northumberland, obtained a charter of creation thereunto, with the yearly fee of 20 pounds, 'nomine comitis,' out of the profits of that country." Some 11 years later a private feud is said to have flared up between this Earl of Northumberland and Earl William Douglas of Angus at Pepperden, near the Cheviot Hills. This is suggested by Brydges' edition of Collins' Peerage to have supplied the story of the ballad of Chevy Chase. If so, it would seem that Northumberland had violated the law of the border by crossing to Scotland to hunt without the Scottish warden's leave and that the Douglas had attacked the hunting party, the resulting skirmish, too unimportant for historians, being embellished by the bards.

Although a soldier first, this earl seems to have had an interest in literature, for he is commemorated among the benefactors of Oxford for having founded three fellowships at University college there for those born in the diocese of Durham, Carlisle or York.

The earl had been appointed Constable of England by Henry VI by the time the War of Roses broke out. He was slain in the Battle of St. Albans in 1455 while fighting beside the king and was buried in the abbey at St. Albans. Shakespeare, in Henry VI, Part I, Act. 2, Scene 4, says the selection of the white and red roses as badges in this conflict occurred at a meeting of some great lords in the Temple garden. Richard Plantagenet, afterward Duke of York, exclaims: "In dumb significance proclaime your thoughts—Let him, that is a true-born gentleman, and stands upon the honor of his birth, if he suppose that I have pleaded truth, from off this brair pluck a white rose with me." To which John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, in behalf of his own kindred of the House of Lancaster, replies: "Let him that is no coward, nor no flatterer, but dare maintain the party of the truth, pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me."

A son of the earl, SIR RALPH PERCY (17) (1425-1464) was seneschal of his father's court at Alnwick. He died on the battlefield of Hedgeley Moor in April 1464. Percy's Cross was erected there to honor his gallantry when he refused to save his skin be fleeing, at the expense of "the bird in his bosom."

Ralph's son, PETER (18), who was born in 1447, was standard bearer for Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.

Peter's son, RICHARD (19), founded Pearce Hall in York.

His son, RICHARD, Jr. (20) changed the family name from Percy to Pierce (also Peirce and Pearce).

## CHAPTER VI

## JOHN PIERCE, ADVENTURER

We come now to the "modern" or American branch of the family. This Richard Pierce had four sons, three of whom came to New England from London and Bristol, England. Their names appear sometimes as Pierce, sometimes Pearce, sometimes Peirce. Hence among the names of their descendants are found all three spellings. The four sons of Richard (20) were:

Richard Jr., (21), the eldest, was born about 1590 and came to Portsmouth, R.I., from Bristol, England, in 1654. He had a wife, Martha, who bore him eight children.

His brother, John (21), citizen and clothworker of London, never came to America. He was a leader of the Merchant Adventurers and owned the Plymouth Colony patent. So little was known of the Pilgrims that for years they were known only as "Mr. Pierce's Company." John procured the patent for New England, superseding the Wincob patent, on Feb. 12, 1620. It conveyed with self-governing powers a tract of land to be selected by the planters near the mouth of the Hudson. It gave 100 acres of land to each planter but confined them within no boundaries. Rent, to be paid after seven years, was set at two shillings per hundred acres, but 1,500 acres were guaranteed to each "undertaker" for support of schools, churches and hospitals.

John, it appears, was something of a knave. His original patent had effect for only a year and in April of 1622 he surreptitiously supplemented it with another granting him additional powers with which he attempted to make the Pilgrims his vassals, but without success. He planned to have no associates but to make himself sole proprietor of the country, making the settlers his tenants and himself their lord, subject to his laws and courts. Other adventurers sought to buy his claim, which had cost him only 50 pounds, but he held out for 500 and the deal fell through.

In December of 1622 he equipped the ship Paragon and set sail to take possession of his kingdom, taking along many passengers and much freight. As if in retribution, wind and waves attacked the vessel and 14 days later she was back at London for repairs. She started a second time the following February with yet more freight and passengers crowded aboard to help cover the losses. A tempest fell upon the ship in mid-ocean, felled her mainmast, washed away her upper works and nearly sank her. Again the Paragon limped back to port. She was repaired a second time and set sail under command of Capt. William Pierce, John's brother. John's losses had been so great he was obliged to make a deal whereby he assigned his patent to the Plymouth Colony.

Bradford's History of Plimouth Plantation (by William Bradford, governor of the Colony from 1621 to shortly before his death in 1657, with the exception of five years) chronicles the Colony's history in detail up to 1646 and is studded with references to both John and William Pierce.

Recording the Paragon's ill-fated voyages, he wrote: "This ship was brought by Mr. John Peirce, and sent out at his own charge, upon hope of great maters. These passengers, & ye goods the company sent in her, he tooke in for fraught, for which they agreed with him to be delivered hear. This was he in whose name their first patente was taken, by reason of acquaintance, and some aliance that some of their friends had with him. But his name was only used in trust. But when he saw they were hear hopfully thus seated, and by ye success God gave them had obtained ye favour of ye Counsell of New-England, he goes and sues to them for another patente of much larger extente (in their names), which was easily obtained. But he mente to keep it to himselfe and alow them what he pleased, to hold of him as tenants, and sue to his courts as cheefe lord, as will appear by that which follows."

Bradford then quotes from a letter written April 9, 1623: "Now with great trouble & loss, we have got Mr. John Peirce to assigne over ye grand patente to ye companie, which he had taken in his owne name, and made quite voyd our former grante. I am sorie to writ how many hear think ye hand of God was justly against him, both ye first & 2. time of his returne; in regarde he whom you and we so confidently trusted, but only to use his name for ye company, should aspire to be lord over us all, and so make you & us tenants at his will and pleasure, our assurance or patente being quite voyd & disanuled by his means ...."

Some sources indicate that John Pierce owned the famous Mayflower. A newspaper clipping of a recent year pictures Sally Pierce of Seattle and describes her as a lineal descendent of "Capt. John Pierce who owned the Mayflower." William Ensign Lincoln states flatly and unequivocally that John Pierce was the owner of the vessel. Other sources add that Thomas Weston was his agent, suggesting that it may not have been known even at the time that Pierce was the real owner.

John Pierce certainly was the "recognized representative" of the Merchant Adventurers (See the May-Flower and Her Log) and Weston just as certainly acted as agent for Pierce and his company in engaging Capt. Christopher Jones to make the voyage and in procuring Pierce's patent (See The Master of the Mayflower). Thus a statement that Weston was his agent insofar as the ship herself was concerned is certainly not illogical.

Ames in The May-Flower and Her Log, presents a good circumstantial case to support his statement that the owner of the Mayflower was "probably" Thomas Goffe, Esq., a shipowner and one of the adventurers. He makes a convincing argument, but it still remains that the ownership of the famous vessel is one of those vexing questions which history has not settled. It apparently would be just as difficult to prove that John Pierce was not the "silent" owner of the Mayflower as it would be to prove he was.

## CHAPTER VII

### WILLIAM PIERCE — 1595 to 1641

Capt. William Pierce (21) born in England about 1595, brother of Richard and John Pierce, and captain of the Mayflower on her second voyage to New England, is as much the hero of this piece as John is the villain.

The regard in which he was held is indicated by this excerpt from Bancroft's History of the United States: "The captain of the Mayflower (on its first voyage), named Jones, had agreed to take them (the Pilgrims) only across the Atlantic. He is said to have been bribed by Virginian and Dutch colonists not to bring the Pilgrims to Virginia or New Amsterdam. Capt. William Pierce would have landed them where they wished, and if he had commanded the Mayflower on that voyage New England might have been settled in Virginia or New York. The Pilgrims had planned to go to the Hudson river."

Although it was not until her second voyage that he was captain of the famed Mayflower, Capt. William had more than his share of "firsts". He brought the first cattle to New England from England (Ship Charity, 1624). He brought from the West Indies to New England the first cotton (1633) and the first sweet potatoes (Ship Desire in 1636). He published the first bound book in English to be printed in North America — Pierce's (Peirse's) Almanac of 1639 calculated for New England and printed by Stephen Day, "an exceedingly illiterate printer," on a press brought to Boston in 1638 by the Rev. Mr. Glover, English clergyman.

Although the first Thanksgiving Day is commonly considered to have been the celebration following the first Pilgrim harvest in 1621, it has been suggested that Captain William Pierce was instrumental in bringing about the first real Thanksgiving observance ten years later!

The winter of 1630-31 was severe, game was scarce, the corn supply was nearly gone, even acorns and ground nuts were concealed by heavy snows. Women of the Colony were set to digging clams; a ration of five kernels of corn a day for each person was ordered. The Colonists were on the verge of starvation and had designated Feb. 22, 1631, as a fast day of prayer.

Governor Winthrop, anticipating a hard winter, had sent Captain Pierce to England for provisions in the ship Lyon the previous fall. Pierce was delayed when he came upon the ship Ambrose, dismasted, and towed her home to Bristol. The Colonists had about given up hope of his return when the Lyon was spied, in the words of Cotton Mather, "just as Winthrop was distributing the last handful of meal in the barrel."

The Lyon was loaded with beef and pork, wheat, peas, oatmeal, cheese, butter, suet and lemon juice. The scheduled fast day was joyfully turned into a Thanksgiving day. Mary Lowe in Thanksgiving, edited by Robert H. Schauffler, calls this "the first Thanksgiving day of which any written record remains in the Colonial records of Massachusetts" and adds, "We may justly

claim this as the origin of Thanksgiving day." Lincoln writes: "This appears to have been the origin of Thanksgiving day." W. deLoss Love, Jr., in Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England, calls the 1621 celebration "a harvest festival . . . . . not a Thanksgiving at all . . . . not a day set aside for religious worship, but a whole week of festivity." Mary Lowe agrees, stating many deny the 1621 celebration was the first Thanksgiving day and pointing out the lack of any religious service during this week of feasting.

Described as the most celebrated master of ships to come into the waters of New England during the Colonists' early history, Captain William was an intimate and confidant of both Gov. William Bradford and Edward Winslow, a founder of the Colony, thrice governor and later commissioner of the United Colonies of New England.

According to Lincoln, Captain William was master of the Mayflower on nine different voyages. He certainly was captain of these ships: Paragon, 1622, (owned by Brother John); Anne, 1623, third ship to arrive from England; Charity, 1624, carrying Winslow and the first cattle from England; Jacob, 1625; Mayflower, 1629; Lyon, 1630, with Roger Williams and wife; Lyon, 1631, with John Elliot and Governor Winthrop's wife; Lyon, 1632, with Winthrop; Rebecca, 1634; Narragansett, 1634.

He was in the West Indies in 1635 and the same year rescued refugees from the Connecticut Valley. He sailed to Block Island in the Desire in 1636 and the next year took supplies from Boston to soldiers fighting the Pequot war. He sailed the Desire from London to Boston in 1638 and the next year sailed her back to London in a record 23 days. In 1641 in the same ship he commanded an expedition carrying dissenters to the West Indies. The Spaniards were hostile and he turned back, stopping at New Providence, an island in the Bahamas, to bring away a congregation there.

Says Colonel Pierce in his Pierce Genealogy: "Though finding the Spaniards already in possession he stood gallantly in, hoping to rescue his countrymen. When the enemy opened upon him with cannon, he sent his people into the hold for safety, retaining on deck but one man to aid in working the ship. While lying in the caboose watching the sails, the captain and this sailor were fatally wounded by the same shot (July 13, 1641). The Desire headed for home, her noble master finding a fitting grave in the blue sea upon which so much of his life had been spent. His death was much lamented in the two colonies, which had so long known him as a skilful navigator and a Christian gentleman."

One of the "two colonies" referred to certainly was Massachusetts, and the other may be Virginia. Lincoln states that Pierce lived briefly (1623-4) at James City, Va., with his wife Jane and 34 servants and that he served as Burgess from James City to the Virginia general assembly, later moving to Boston. Colonel Pierce, however, gives as William's addresses only Bristol, England, Boston and Providence in the Bahamas.

## CHAPTER VIII

## MICHAEL PIERCE, 1615 to 1676

The fourth brother, CAPT. MICHAEL PIERCE (21), was captain of the Colonists' militia after serving as ensign under Miles Standish, and perished March 26, 1676, "in the greatest calamity to befall Plymouth Colony during King Phillip's War." He was born in 1615 in England, probably Bristol, and moved to Boston about 1647, settling at nearby Scituate. While there is evidence in the town records of his participation in public affairs he is best remembered for his military accomplishments.

The military in 1666 nominated James Cudworth to the Colony court for ratification as captain, Michael Pierce as lieutenant. The court replied the selection of Cudworth "is directly against the advice of the court, and as to Mr. Pierce, he is a stranger to us; therefore Sergt. John Daman is directed to take command till further orders." During the next three years the court apparently came to know Pierce for it commissioned him captain in 1669.

In 1675 Pierce made a will which started: "Being now, by the appointment of God, going out to war against the Indians . . . ." He took part in the Narragansett fight in December of that year and escaped with his life. During the spring of 1676 the Narragansetts ravaged settlements in Rhode Island and even penetrated to Plymouth and killed a number of inhabitants. Captain Pierce, with about 55 English and some 20 Christian Indians, was ordered to pursue them. He tracked them to the Blackstone river, near Pawtucket, R.I., where on Sunday, March 26, 1676, the Captain Michael Pierce fight took place, ending in what was to stand as the greatest massacre of whites by Indians until Custer and the Little Big Horn, just 200 years later.

Spying a few Indians on the opposite bank, limping as they ran into the woods, he led his men across the river. The company fell into an ambuscade with some thousand Indians on three sides and the river at its rear. Pierce formed his men in a circle and they fought for two hours, managing to withdraw across the river only to be surrounded on that side by 400 more redskins, who killed all but a few who escaped and nine who were taken prisoners. These last were led a short distance away and tortured and killed at what is now called Nine Men's Misery.

Captain Pierce fell early in the battle, and about 50 other English and 11 friendly Indians perished, but not before they had despatched 140 of the enemy. Pierce had sent a messenger from Rehobeth, Mass., to Providence, requesting assistance, after learning that Indians had been reported at Pawtucket, but the messenger attended divine service before delivering the message and reinforcements were too late.

The rest of the enemy band went the next day to Rehobeth and burned 40 dwellings and, two days later, set the torch to 29 at Providence. Pierce's defeat and the Indians' boldness caused the United Colonies to send into the field almost their entire strength. The Indians retreated to the west but the English captured Canonchet, son of Chief Miantonomi, and took him to Stonington, Conn., where he was put to death. His head was sent to Hartford and his body burned. When told what was in store for him, Canonchet grunted: "I like it well. I shall die before my heart is soft, or I have said anything unworthy of myself."

For whatever it may signify there is an entry in the records at Plymouth, dated March, 1669, stating that "Miche. Peirse of Scituate, was presented at the court for unseemly carriages toward Sarah Nichols of Scituate." The court remitted the presentment because there appeared only one testimony to it and it was written and not read to the deponent.

Captain Pierce was twice married, the second time to Annah James. He had eight daughters and one son. It is through Capt. Michael Pierce's son that my line descends.

ADDENDA ET ERRATA

The paragraph immediately above should read: Captain Pierce was twice married ,the second time to Annah James. He had eight daughters and three sons. My line descends from his son, Ephraim.

## CHAPTER IX
## 1650 to 1968

Michael's son, EPHRAIM (22), born probably at Scituate, Mass., about 1650, married Hannah Holbrook, daughter of John Holbrook of Weymouth. They moved to Warwick, R.I., and in 1681 Ephraim was made freeman of the Colony from Providence. His will, dated July 18, 1718, was proved at Warwick, Sept. 23, 1719. He died Sept. 14 of that year. He had eight children.

His eldest, AZRIKIM (23) was born Jan 4, 1671, and married Sarah Heywood (or Howard) Dec. 31, 1696. She died Aug. 12, 1712, and he married Elizabeth Esten May 6, 1713, daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Esten. He lived at Warwick until he moved about 1720 to Rehobeth, Mass.

First child by the second marriage was JOSEPH (24), born April 7, 1714. He married Mary Martin Oct. 3, 1734, and lived at Rehobeth. He died May 5, 1787.

First of his 12 children was NATHANIEL (25), born July 9, 1735. He married Sarah Pierce June 24, 1756, and had seven children. He died Feb. 26, 1821.

AARON (26) was born Sept. 20, 1765. He married twice, first on Nov. 14, 1793, Elipha Bliss, daughter of Capt. Samuel Bliss, and second, on Jan. 23, 1800, Nancy Rounds. Like his father, he lived at Rehobeth.

Second of his ten children also was named AARON (27). He was born Sept. 11, 1810, and he, too, was twice married. His first wife was Emily Brown whom he married March 10, 1845. She died July 6, 1854. He married Frances E. Bailey April 16, 1855. Curtis Irish Pierce was his son by the first marriage. Cannie Belle Pierce was his daughter by the second marriage. Aaron lived at Westerly, R.I.

CANNIE (28) was born March 27, 1862, and on April 9, 1883, married Charles H. Ledward (Born Dec. 6, 1861; died Nov. 6, 1924). He held the rank of captain in the Spanish-American War and during World War I rose in the National Guard to the rank of colonel. He was superintendent of the Smith Granite Co. at Westerly. Cannie, intelligent and well informed, died at New London, Conn., Nov. 5, 1946, at the age of 84, after expressing the opinion the unseasonably hot weather was attributable to the atomic bomb and asking me, with a grin, to pray for her to die quickly.

MADELAINE (29) with the exception of a son who died in infancy, the only child of Cannie and Charles, was born Feb. 15, 1887, at Westerly. She married Dr. Irving Colby, osteopathic physician, June 23, 1909, and they moved shortly afterward to New London, Conn. (Irving, born Oct. 20, 1877. at Warner, N.H.; died Nov. 28, 1967, at New London, Conn., was descended from Leonard Harriman who came to this country from England in 1638. One of his ancestors was killed in the King Philip war, one died in 1690 on the expedition against Quebec, one was governor of New Hampshire. He was a past president of the Connecticut Osteopathic Society and was prominent in Masonic bodies). He and Madelaine had three children, all of whom celebrate their birthdays on February 28th. They are Barnard Ledward Colby (Born Feb. 28, 1911; died ); Chester Harriman Colby (Born Feb. 27, 1915; died ); and Norma Colby (Born Feb. 28, 1922; died ).

CHESTER (30), a Purple Heart veteran of World War II, is an electronics engineer who has worked at the U.S. Navy Submarine Base and for the Bureau of Ships at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corp. at Groton, Conn., the Navy Underwater Sound Laboratory at New London, and other installations.

NORMA (30) married William L. Darrow, Jr., of New London, (also a combat veteran captain of World War II) on March 21, 1942, at Hattiesburg, Miss. Their children are Carolyn (31), born Jan. 8, 1944, at Orville, Calif.; William L. Darrow, 3rd (31), born Dec. 21, 1946, at New London: Kathryn (31) born Feb. 14, 1948, at New London; Jason C. (31) born May 20, 1951, at Ozark, Ala.; and Calvin B. (31) born Dec. 29, 1952, at Stuttgart, Germany. William L. Darrow, Jr., died Aug. 9, 1956, at Fort Hood, Texas, where with the rank of lieutenant colonel he commanded the 126th Armored Ordnance Battalion.

BARNARD (30) was graduated from Lafayette College in 1933 and June 15 that year went to work as a reporter for The Day, New London, Conn., of which he is now the publisher. He is now president of the New England Daily Newspaper Assn. and is a past president of the Connecticut Daily Newspapers Assn. For eight years he was a director of the American Newspaper Publishers Assn. and is now secretary and a director of the ANPA Research Institute and secretary and a trustee of the ANPA Foundation. He married Oct. 23, 1937, at New London Ruth Marie Andrews, daughter of Orvin G. and Ethel D. Andrews, and they have three children: Robert Andrews Colby (31), born Sept. 25, 1941; and twins, David Pierce and Dorothy Louise Colby (31), born Jan 8, 1945.

ROBERT (31) served two years in the Navy, was graduated from Mitchell College and Boston University, worked as reporter and wire editor for the Manchester, Conn., Herald, then as copy editor for The Day in New London. Married Oct. 12, 1967, Suzanne Solomons, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. I.A. Solomons, III, at New London.

DAVID (31) served two years in the Navy, won the Navy Commendation Medal for diving from the deck of a ship to save an injured officer, attended Mitchell College, performed publicly as guitarist and folk singer, and now lives with his wife (the former Mary Foster Caird, daughter of Robert and Olive Moore Caird of Old Greenwich, Conn.) and son, Eric Pierce Colby (32) (born Dec. 2, 1968) at Brattleboro, Vt., where he is on the advertising staff of The Reformer.

DOROTHY (31) attended Green Mountain College, was graduated from Mitchell College and from Goethe Institut at Blaubeuren, Germany. Married Oct. 26, 1968, at New London to Michael Royal Durham, son of Dr. Robert B. Durham of Mamora, N.J., and Margaret McClaren Durham of Philadelphia. She now is employed at the University of Hartford where her husband is completing work for his degree. He is a combat Marine veteran of Vietnam where he was wounded three times and an honor graduate of Mitchell College.

## CHAPTER X

## COUSINS

Here are some glimpses of fascinating characters in the family who, though not in my direct line, are included because they led lives that make good reading and will be of interest to other family members who may trace their descent from them. This chapter follows another limb of the tree from Sir Ralph Percy (17) mentioned in Chapter V.

Eldest surviving son of the second Earl of Northumberland and brother of Sir Ralph Percy (17) was another Henry, who became third Earl. His great uncle was Cardinal Beaufort. He is the Earl of Northumberland who appears in the third part of Shakespeare's King Henry VI. In the War of the Roses he stood with the House of Lancaster and fell at Towton.

His son Henry was not yet 21 when his father died but Edward IV, fearing the family, confined him in the tower for eight years. Later restored to honors and possessions, he served as Lord High Chamberlain of England under King Richard. Under the Tudors he was assigned to collect an unpopular tax and was murdered (1489) by a mob which mistakenly thought him the author of it.

His eldest son, Henry Algernon Percy, became fifth Earl of Northumberland at 11. Later he received the honorable assignment of conducting Princess Margaret Tudor from Northamptonshire to her fiance, James IV, in Scotland. A son-in-law, Henry, eleventh Baron Clifford, later Earl of Cumberland, led the life of an outlaw in his youth, heading a band of freebooters and demanding contributions from frightened monks and villagers.

The fifth earl's son, Sir Thomas Percy, in response to shouts of "thousands for a Percy," let himself be talked into leading an uprising against the King. He was arrested, found guilty of treason and hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in June of 1537.

Henry Algernon Percy, sixth Earl of Northumberland, while in the retinue of Cardinal Wolsey, fell in love with one of Queen Catherine's ladies in waiting, Anne Boleyn, unaware that King Henry VIII was his rival. Anne returned his affection and it has been said by some to have resulted in their engagement. But the king took her as his wife, later sending her to the tower on a charge of adultery. When the lord steward, Anne's uncle, gave sentence that she was to be burned or beheaded at the king's pleasure, the Earl of Northumberland left the court "seized with sudden illness". She was beheaded May 19, 1536. The Earl died the following year.

The seventh Earl, Henry, was with many other nobles sympathetic to the captive Mary, beautiful Queen of Scots, and with the Earl of Westmoreland led an uprising in her behalf against Queen Elizabeth. It was unsuccessful and he fled to Scotland but was captured by the Scottish Earl of Morton and handed over to Elizabeth. She had him beheaded Aug. 22, 1572 and paid Morton in gold the price of blood. (Sir Walter Scott wrote: "It was an additional and aggravating circumstance that it was a Douglas who betrayed a Percy; and when

the annals of their ancestors were considered, it was found that while they presented many acts of open hostility, many instances of close and firm alliance, they never, till now, had afforded an example of any act of treachery exercised by one family against the other.")

The seventh Earl's brother, Henry (later eighth Earl of Northumberland) was in the plot but escaped with a fine of 5,000 marks. Later, however, he was suspected of planning a joint rebellion and invasion to put Mary on the throne and was sent to the tower where, on June 21, 1585, he was shot in bed. Whether he died by an assassin's hand or his own has never been proved but it is suspected he chose suicide "to balk Queen Elizabeth of the forfeiture" of his estates. (By dying before judgment was pronounced he was not attainted of treason and his lands thus could not be forfeited to the crown.)

Henry, ninth Earl, sought distinction by enlisting as a volunteer in the naval expedition which destroyed the Spanish armada (1588). He was later prominent in the proceedings which led to the union of England with Scotland but only two years after the accession of King James was fined 20,000 pounds and sent to the tower for 15 years on suspicion of complicity in the "gunpowder plot." The suspicion was based only on his kinship to Thomas Percy, his constable of Alnwick castle, who was a conspirator.

Algernon Percy, tenth Earl, occupied the dignified office of Lord high constable at the coronation of Charles II.

Joscelin Percy, eleventh Earl, died while traveling at Turin, May 21, 1670. His son, and heir apparent, had died in infancy and the earldom, later raised to a dukedom, was conferred upon George Fitzroy, illegitimate son of Charles II. He died without issue and the title went to the Lady Elizabeth Percy, daughter of the tenth Earl of Northumberland. Her son, Algernon Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Earl of Northumberland and of Egremont, had a daughter, Lady Elizabeth Seymour, who married Sir Hugh Smithson, a Yorkshire baronet. He assumed the name Percy and obtained the Dukedom of Northumberland.

Newspaper clipping dated 1898: "The Duke of Northumberland who died on Monday will be interred in St. Nicholas chapel, Westminister Abbey, where the Percy family have the right of burial . . . . The late Duke lived the life of a recluse during recent years. Earl Percy, the eldest son, succeeds to the dukedom, which carries with it nearly 200,000 acres of land in Northumberland and many thousands of acres in Surrey and Middlesex, the income being nearly 250,000 pounds ($1,250,000) a year."

Another newspaper clipping, undated but presumably of the period between the two World wars: "The late Duke of Northumberland — Percy he was to the British military intelligence over which he presided at one time in the World war — was a great collector of arms and armor. Among his swords he considered his most valuable possession to be a second century blade of unknown composition with bronze scabbard and hilt which was found in the River Whitham below Lincoln in 1826 . . . ."

Thus ends the tale of the Percys and the Pierces. "Concerning this nebular history, then," as Harvard Professor Benjamin Pierce once asked, "is it a human invention, or is it a Divine record? Is it 'a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing,' or is it a plan of infinite imagination, signifying immortality?"

THE END

# NOTES

# NOTES